

## **Address to the convocation Of Rhodes University**

**23 August 2008**

The past year at Rhodes has been eventful in many respects and this Convocation is an opportunity to share with you recent developments and the emerging trajectory of Rhodes in the coming years.

The building blocks to reinvent ourselves in critical areas have begun to be put in place so as to ensure that in the decades to come Rhodes will not only remain a distinctive and pre-eminent university, but also one that discharges constitutional obligations and engages with socio-economic challenges. The changes that have occurred and are in train are a necessary condition of securing a dynamic and sustainable future for Rhodes.

During the past year, the University finalised its trajectories with respect to growth and size, and shape in terms of teaching and research programmes. This was the outcome of a long, deliberative and participatory process involving faculties, departments, academics and administrators and also extensive discussions with the Ministry of Education.

We reached agreement with the Ministry of Education that whereas in 2007 our student enrolment was some 6000 students, by 2010 Rhodes will

- Grow to 6 500 students, a growth rate of about 2.5% per annum
- Seek to increase enrolments in the natural sciences
- Seek to increase postgraduate enrolments

Currently, student enrolment is 6 258 students and we are thus on track to meet our target enrolment of 6500 students by 2010.

In so far as teaching and research are concerned, I wish to highlight some of the goals the University will pursue in coming years:

- Law
  - ✓ Double, over the next ten years, the current intake of 120 LLB students to 240 students
  - ✓ Investigate the viability of a Centre for African Child Forensic Studies
- Commerce
  - ✓ Significantly expand the current enrolment of 40 students in the Economics honours programme (annually there are applications from over one hundred students)
  - ✓ Seek to introduce new honours and postgraduate diploma programmes in Commerce
- Science
  - ✓ Seek to expand undergraduate natural science enrolments, recognising that enrolment will largely be dependent on the supply of secondary school students with maths and science
  - ✓ Expand postgraduate enrolments through new honours programmes
  - ✓ Explore an Astrophysics Institute to support the SKA programme with a commitment of R15 million from the SKA
  - ✓ Institute a Nanotechnology Centre with R15 million in funding from MINTEK
- Education
  - ✓ Increase enrolment of the *Postgraduate Certificate in Education* to prepare teachers for both senior and primary school levels.
  - ✓ Expand postgraduate enrolments in the field of higher education through the *Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education*, Masters and Doctoral degree studies in a new Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning
- Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
  - ✓ Investigate new masters programmes in integrated development and development studies

- ✓ Establish a Confucius Institute supported by Chinese donor funding
- ✓ Establish a Masters programme in Organisational Psychology
- ✓ Establish a new Masters programme in Fine Arts
- ✓ Establish a donor funded (South African Reserve Bank) chair in African Economics Journalism
- ✓ Establishment of a donor funded (MTN) chair in new media
- ✓ Pilot the establishment, in partnership with the University of Johannesburg, of a Centre for the Study of Democracy
- ✓ Investigate the establishment of a unit and programme on pro-poor social policy within the Institute for Social and Economic Research
- ✓ Complete the digitization of the International Library of African Music (ILAM) collection to serve as an invaluable cultural and research resource

The University is proud to report that it has been the recipient of two prestigious chairs, one in Chemistry (Prof. Tebello Nyokong) and one in Marine Science (Prof. Christopher Mcquaid). We hope to win more chairs and a number of niche areas of strong expertise have been identified.

In order to give greater substance to our wonderful motto 'Where Leaders Learn', initial seed money of R250 000 has been allocated to explore a curriculum initiative in this regard.

The project of a long-term partnership between Rhodes and historically disadvantaged secondary schools in Grahamstown to improve conditions at these schools is slowly maturing. A steering committee made up of representatives from Rhodes, the school principals, the DoE and the teacher union has been established. R 250 000 has also been allocated to give impetus to this partnership.

The growth, size and shape goals of the University have necessitated attention being given to institutional infrastructure to support the achievement of goals. In this regard, I wish to note the following developments.

- From 8 September onwards we will begin building a new 4500 square metres library and also refurbish the current

library. This will cost R90 million, and will be one of the largest undertakings in the history of Rhodes. We have already raised R50 million from the Department of Education and we are confident of raising the remaining R40 million from local and overseas donors, the business sector and alumni. By the end of this month we hope to have secured a donation of R20 million from an individual, and by the end of the year a further R7 million from an overseas donor, which would take our fundraising up to over R 30 million

- Two new residences (Kimberley 7 and 8) have been completed, that are accommodating an additional 146 students.
- Two further residences, with funding of R30 million from the Department of Education, are under construction and will accommodate 206 students as from the 2009 academic year.

Having already secured R80 million from the Department, we hope to secure an additional commitment of R100 million plus for the period 2010-2012 for more residences, a new dining hall and new academic and research facilities.

We will also continue to give attention to assisting our staff to purchase affordable accommodation and to improving their remuneration in accordance with our means.

In the past year we have also been giving attention and will continue to give attention to issues of equity and institutional culture so that Rhodes becomes a 'home for all' and respects and affirms difference and diversity. Every one at Rhodes, irrespective of race, sex, gender, nationality, religion or language, whether they are students, academics, wardens, technicians, secretaries, messengers or ground staff, must be accorded respect and dignity.

A second phase of a the Development Programme that seeks to provide opportunities for prospective black and women academics will be instituted with a new \$600 000 grant from the Mellon Foundation. It is hoped that additional complementary funds of \$ 1 million will be provided by another donor.

A process of institutional and senior administrative restructuring initiated has been finalised.

- A new Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Sizwe Mabizela, formerly head of the Department of Mathematics, took office on 1 May 2008.
- A new Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Development, Dr. Peter Clayton, a former head of the Department of Computer Science, took office on 1 April 2008. This is a new post that replaces the previous post of Dean of Research, and includes new development initiatives, internationalisation and the library. The current Dean of Research, Prof. John Duncan, who has ably served the University for many years, takes early retirement at the end of 2008..
- The appointment of Prof. Chrissie Boughey to a newly created post of Dean of Learning and Teaching, which is combined with the directorship of the new Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL). CHERTL replaces the current Academic Development Centre, and will be the hub of the University's expanded initiatives in postgraduate programmes, training and research in the field of higher education
- The creation of the post of Director of Community Engagement, occupied since the beginning of the year by Dr Joyce Nduna, who brings valuable expertise in the area of community engagement and especially service learning.
- A new Institutional Planning Unit (IPU) with the responsibilities of supporting institutional (enrolment, academic and infrastructural) planning and undertaking institutional research has been created. The IPU will be guided by the new Institutional Planning Committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

Finally, following the end of terms of a number of current Council members, a new University Council has been effectively constituted.

Rhodes University enjoys a deserved reputation for the quality of its academic programmes, pass and graduation rates, research output per academic staff member and the quality of its graduates. Students and scholars enjoy a physical, social

and intellectual environment that is generally optimal for the core pursuits of a university: knowledge production and dissemination, contributing to human understanding and economic and social development through research, the development of high quality graduates, intellectuals and citizens, and community engagement.

At the same time, we must confront numerous challenges. Some of these challenges it faces in common with other South African universities. Other challenges are a consequence of being the smallest university in South Africa, and of Rhodes' particular history and geographical location.

During the past year, many of the building blocks for maintaining Rhodes as an outstanding university that also embraces its reinvention, renewal and transformation in important areas have been put into place. Others remain to be put into place for ensuring the effective pursuit of institutional goals and strategies.

If the challenges are numerous and varied, they are far from insurmountable. With the necessary will, and intelligent, reasoned and democratic deliberation that befits a university, they should also be treated as opportunities for institutional innovation, reinvention and renewal of Rhodes as a small but great university.